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Act Two - Scene One: A Master Stroke

The stage and auditorium. The following evening.

Dim house Lights to half. Entr'acte. House Lights down. Segue tuning-up noises from the band. Lights build on the curtains and boxes. After a moment, Richard enters Box Six. He glares at Box Five, then slumps, defeated. Raoul appears, urgently offstage, checking his watch, backing into Richard.

Richard: Oh, do sit down! Nothing's going to happen now the blasted girl's singing. It's what the ghost wants, isn't it?

Raoul: *(sitting)* So that's why we're in this box. You believe in him now.

Richard: I didn't say that.

The tuning-up noises stop, and the Persian enters Box Five in the silence. He doesn't sit, but looks carefully about the auditorium.

Richard and Raoul react, leaning forward.

Raoul: I say! Who's that sinister-looking fellow?

Richard: Some Persian prince. He was here the night Carlotta got chandeliered. He's insisted on coming again. He must want to see *Faust* pretty badly, that's all I can say.

Music, and the Lights begin to dim

Oh, good. Only the last bit to go.

Raoul: Yes, we're in for a treat now. This is where the *rejuvenated* Faust appears.

The curtains open on a dimly lit scene. The usual Faust cloth at the rear, a low palliasse to the R on which reclines Christine, dressed in a pretty white shift, her hair down.

SONG 10: AH! DO I HEAR MY LOVER'S VOICE?

A scream. Commotion from Box Six, Lights revert. Faust is still holding is note, but his arms are empty.

Raoul: *(jumping out of the box)* She's gone! Where's she gone?

He runs off, L

Faust: *(singing perfectly in time)* Marguerite!

Richard: *(completely fed-up)* Oh, shut up!

He leaves the box. The puzzled Faust looks at his empty arms, around him, under him.

A Voice, pretending to be an irate member of the audience comes from the rear of the auditorium.

Voice: Right, that's it! I'm not coming here again! This bloody Opera never gets finished!

Raoul runs back on.

Raoul: *(to Faust)* What happened to her?

Faust: I didn't notice, I was singing.

He exits R.

Raoul: She's completely disappeared!

Timpani roll. The Lights flicker a few times, then almost go out, just a dim downlight on Raoul.

Oh, my God! Of course! *Him!* *(He hurls orders off)* Get lanterns, everybody! Clear the auditorium! She must be found! It's a matter of life and death!

He runs off.

The curtains fall into place, and people appear in the auditorium, with lanterns, Debienne down aisle R, Stage Hands and Lisette extreme R and L, and along the front, if there is room. Dominique, an usher, is in the dress circle, if there is one. There is only a glimmer of light. Each lights his own face by holding the lantern close to it.

Richard: *(appearing in the curtain split, carrying his lantern)* There's no sign of her backstage. *(He calls out front)* What about my staff? Any sign out there?

SONG 11: NO SIGN! I SEE NO SIGN!

Richard goes through the curtains, L, Jammes through the curtains, R, Madam Giry through the curtains, C, the remainder using all available exits, timing to leave just as they finish singing. The last thing we see is Madam Giry, who turns sharply front as the music finishes. Snap out the follow spot, together with snap to Black-out. Segue scene change music. The boxes truck off, and the curtain rises on:

Act Two - Scene Two: The Entrance To The Underworld

Christine's dressing-room. Immediately following.

The room as before, but lit a little brighter. Raoul hurries in from R, carrying his lantern, halting LC, puzzled to find the room still lit. There is a ripply of Eastern music, and the Persian peels himself from off the hat stand, R, where he has been concealed, like a suit of clothes. Raoul becomes aware of the prescence behind him, and turns sharply, reacting back.

Raoul: What are you doing here?

The Persian: You are not going to find her like this, my young friend.

Raoul: What do you know about all this?

The Persian: Enough that we may yet save her.

He points a pistol at Raoul, who gasps and raises his hands. But the Persian reverses it and hands it to him.

Here. Take this pistol.

Raoul puts the lantern on the dressing-table, glancing up at the pistol.

Raoul: It's not loaded.

The Persian: Bullets are useless against him. To protect yourself, you must always hold it so. *(He produces his own pistol and jumps into a position, legs straddled, the barrel held up vertically against his nose)* Ha!

Raoul: Really, sir.

The Persian: If you wish to rescue the young lady, and survive this night, you must attend me. Ha! *(He jumps into the position again)*

The force of his personality forces Raoul to immediately follow suit.

Raoul: Ha!

The Persian: *(examining him critically)* Very good. *(He puts his gun away and moves up to the potted plant)* Whenever danger threatens, keep it like that - always.

Richard: *(off)* Putting the dressing-rooms at the top of the theatre! I've never climbed so many steps.

He runs in from R, followed by Remy, both still carrying lanterns, across to Raoul, who automatically drops into the position.

Raoul: Ha!

Richard: *(skidding to a halt)* Raoul, what are you doing?

The Persian: *(moving DR)* He is obeying my instructions, Mr Richard.

Richard and Remy turn to him.

Richard: Good heavens! It's the Persian Prince.

The Persian: I have many titles. The Shah of the Oasis. The Sultan of Samarkand. But I am best known as the Great Mysterioso - *(He plucks a cigarette out of the air)* - Conjurer to Kings - *(He takes a lighted match from his lapel and holds it to the cigarette)*

Richard: Why, you - you -

Remy: Imposter!

Richard: Thank you, Remy.

Pleased, Remy crosses up and looks under the dressing-table.

The Persian: Forgive the deception, but it was necessary to gain admittance here undetected.

He crosses R and examines the moulding on the portal. Seeing him do this, Raoul does the same, L.

Richard: And just how, sir, are you involved in Miss Daae's disappearance?

The Persian: In no way, my friend. I could never have spirited her away so adroitly, and three is only one better than myself - *him*.

Richard: You don't mean - *him* him?

Behind them, Remy leans against the mirror and it spins on its central axis, edge on to the audience, revealing blackness beyond. Music.

The Persian: I do.

Remy: Good heavens, sir, look at this!

Richard: Quiet, Remy.

Remy: But, sir - !

Richard: Not now, Remy! I'm thinking.

Richard moves R, above the Persian, almost off stage, thinking. The Persian and Raoul are examining their mouldings, R and L. Remy shrugs, lifts the lantern, and goes behind the mirror. A timpani roll, and the mirror closes on him. We see him through the mirror turn and tug at it, unable to open it. He waves at them - at first easily, then more frantically, his mouth opening and shutting, but no sound being heard.

The Phantom appears behind him, puts a white-gloved hand over his mouth, and drags him off into the darkness. Rattle from the band.

Richard: *(moving back onstage)* All right, I've thought.

Raoul: Yes?

The Persian: And?

Richard: What the hell's going on? And what exactly is your connection with this 'him' fellow?

The Persian: *(crossing to the dressing table)* Let us only say the man you call The Phantom once spent a great deal of time in Persia, and we came to know one another.

Richard: You mean to say he's not a ghost?

Raoul: He never has been, Father.

The Persian: I was here when the chandelier fell. I knew him then. He is very real.

Richard: *(full of relief)* Not a ghost, after all? Why, that's...that's -

Remy screams, off.

It's what Remy? (He moves UC) Good God! (He moves DL)

Raoul: *(crossing R, fast)* He's vanished into thin air!

The Persian: *(moving DC, taking out his pistol fast)* Quick, man! For your life! Put up your pistol! *(To Richard)* You too, sir!

Richard: *(fed up)* I haven't got a pistol!

The Persian: It doesn't matter. Hold the hand so! *(He leaps into the position, facing front)* Ha!

Raoul: *(leaping into the position, facing front)* Ha!

Richard: *(leaping into the position, facing front)* Ha!

Music. The Persian peers about him.

The Persian: *(softly, to Richard)* Our friend, you see, is an expert with the Punjab Lasso.

Richard stares.

Oh, yes.

He prowls and they do the same, staring nervously into the shadows. He moves up to the mirror.

This is the room from which Miss Daae disappeared, I believe...(He peers closer at the mirror moulding) Aha!

He presses the same spot as Remy. The same ripple of music, and the mirror swings open, the Persian reacting back against the wall, R. Remy appears in the blackness without his lantern. Music.

Richard: Remy!

Remy walks slowly towards them.

Remy?

Remy collapses onto his face, UC. There is the handle of a large dagger in his back. The music stops.

Remy!

He and Raoul kneel either side of Remy, The Persian keeps half an eye on them, half an eye through the mirror, R, his gun at the ready.

Raoul: He's been stabbed! *(He peers closer)* Right through the heart.

The Persian: At least it was quick and painless. This is rare where *he* is concerned.

Richard: Poor Remy. He was damned irritating, but he could be so - so -

He appeals to Raoul and The Persian, but they can only shrug. He rises.

I don't know what your plans are, Mr Mysterious Persian, but count me in. I'll see this devil dead if it's the last thing I do.

Raoul: Well said, Father.

The Persian: *(peering off)* There are steps here, leading down. Very narrow, very steep. He can't be far below us.

Raoul: *(crossing to snatch up his lantern)* Then let's get after him!

The Persian: *(holding up a hand)* No, my young friend - after *me*. I know his little tricks. And remember - the hand always so. *(He gets into the position)* Ha!

Raoul: *(into the position)* Ha!

Richard: *(into the position)* Ha!

The Persian: Very good.

Music. The Persian creeps off into the darkness.

Raoul and Richard follow him, either side of the mirror. Raoul R, Richard L. Richard pauses and calls Raoul back.

Richard: Here, I say, Raoul...

They return to peer round the mirror to one another.

Are you sure we can - ?

Raoul: Trust this Persian? What choice do we have, Father?

He goes, Richard pauses, looks back at Remy. The music tender.

Richard: 'Efficient'...that was the word.

Finger before nose, he goes, the Lights fading to black-out, a cymbal crescendo covering the change as the boxes truck on, the curtains fly in, and very dim Light builds to:

Act Two - Scene Three: Box Five

The stage and auditorium. Immediately following.

Very dim light. During the change, Faust and Jammes, both carrying lanterns, have entered the auditorium and ascended the stage, moving to C, Faust leading the way.

Faust: Talk about Miss Daae disappearing! Anybody could in this murk.

Madam Giry, carrying a lantern, appears between them suddenly through the centre of the curtains.

Madam Giry: You two!

Jammes shrieks and runs round to Faust.

What are you still doing here? Everybody else gave up and went home ages ago!

Faust: We'd like to, but we can't find the way out.

Madam Giry: *(pointing R)* Try going through the door marked Exit. *(As they move off)* It also says Gentlemen, but don't let that put you off.

They descend into the auditorium.

And turn left at the end of the corridor - the right-hand stairs lead down to the cellars.

Faust: Right you are. Left it is.

He cries out as he bangs his shin on the way out of an auditorium door.

Madam Giry: Useless great lump. If village idiots could sing, they'd all be tenors.

As she goes to follow them, there is a bump and a cry from the gallery.

Who's that up there?

Dominique: Dominique, Madam Giry, the Head Usherette. I'm lost, as well. Why doesn't Mauclair put some light on?

Madam Giry: I'm just off down the cellars to sort him out. If I'm not mistaken, he'll be kipping in the boiler room.

Dominique: How will I find my way out?

Madam Giry: *(descending into the auditorium, R)* Follow your nose, dear. You'll probably end up in the bar, but that's nothing new.

Dominique: Thank you very much, Madam Giry -

Madam Giry goes out of the auditorium door.

- Miserable old bat. Still, she may have a point. This way, I think.

A loud bump, a cry and a sting. Light builds on Box Five.

The Persian: *(off, whispering)* Watch your heads. It's very low here.

Dominique: What's that?

Richard: *(off, whispering)* Secret passages in my opera house! Whatever next?

Another thud.

Ow!

Raoul: *(off, whispering)* What is it, Father?

Richard: *(off, whispering)* It's very low here.

Dominique: What's going on there?

The Persian: *(off, whispering)* I've found some kind of lever. Take care. I'm going to pull it.

Music, and a creaking sound. A front panel of Box Five swings open, and a white-gloved hand appears. Dominique screams, running from the auditorium. The scream is kept going off down corridors for as long as possible. The hand withdraws.

Richard: *(off, whispering)* What the hell was that?

Raoul: *(off, whispering)* God knows, but it sounded awful.

The Persian: *(off, whispering)* Yes, gentlemen, your pistol hands. Ha!

Raoul: *(off, whispering)* Ha!

Richard: *(off, whispering)* Ha!

Music again, and the panel re-opens. Finger and gun before nose, Richard and Raoul poke their heads out. After a beat, The Persian's head rises up from the box, just his nose and eyes visible.

Good Lord, we're back in the auditorium!

The Persian: Yes - a secret passageway with an exit through the floor of Box Five. We now know how he managed Miss Daae's disappearance from the stage.

Raoul: And from her dressing-room.

Richard: Up on the top floor. We're descending very rapidly.

Raoul: She said he lives on the lake, and that's below the bottom cellar.

The Persian: We must continue on down and let us pray we are in time. I know this monster, and God knows what devilment he has in mind for her - God knows.

The Light fade quickly to Black-out as they withdraw back into the box. Music, the boxes truck off. After one full figure is played, the curtains open and continue on to fly out on:

Act Two - Scene Four: The Lake

Below the bottom Cellar. The lake. Immediately following.

Projecting on from UR, a narrow wooden jetty with steps, and post. The floor is covered with dry ice, and a mist hangs in the background. Ripples play on everything. There is the sound of water, and of dripping, all echoing. There is echo on all sound, speech and singing in this scene. The music continues, sombre, beautiful. The elegant prow of The Phantom's boat appears from extreme UL. Christine is draped over it on her back so that we see her upturned face, her long hair falling into the water. The Phantom rows, his back to us.

He guides it slowly to the jetty, ships the oars, rises, lifts her, and steps up on to the jetty. He puts her down slowly, and she looks about her, dazed, uncomprehending, remembering nothing.

Christine: *(seeing him)* You...But why?...Why?...Where am I?

He crosses to her right, taking her by the hand, ready to lead her off.

Raoul: *(off, extremely faint)* Christine...!

The Phantom reacts.

Christine: What is it?

Raoul: *(off, extremely faint)* Christine...!

The Phantom reacts again.

Christine: Did you hear something?

Softly, The Phantom places her against the post, and uses loose rope from it to bind her to it, her hands behind her back.

What are you doing?...I did as I promised.

He steps into the boat.

I sang Marguerite for you one last time.

He pushes it off and rows across L.

I don't understand why you're treating me this way...Answer me...Why won't you speak?

He steps from the boat on to the inside edge of the portal and begins to climb up, the boat continuing its drift off.

Don't leave me...where are you going? What are you going to do?

As high as he can go, he holds out a hand to her, then climbs off L and exits.

Alone, Christine tugs at the bonds, looks about her. There is a long pause from her while the music continues.

This awful place. (She sings)

SONG 12: SOMEWHERE ABOVE THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT

The Lights fade to Black-out and the jetty trucks off R, with Christine aboard. The boiler is set from extreme UL, and the black cloth dropped in behind it, all very quickly. Lights build on:

Act Two - Scene Five: The Persian's Tale

The Boiler Room. Immediately following.

The music dies. The boiler is huge and black, UC, with two large round doors. Smoke from the last scene still drifts, and there is a loud him. After a moment, Madam Giry enters from L, the lantern held high in the gloom. There is echo on all sound, dialogue and song in this scene.

Madam Giry: *(crossing slowly R)* Mauclair! Are you in the boiler room?...If he's asleep again, I'll have his guts for garters...Mauclair!

To a huge sting, the body of Mauclair crashes at her feet from UR, and she reacts with a scream. Recovering, holding out the lantern, she slowly approaches the body again.

Mauclair? That's a bit of deep sleep, even for you.

A soft thud, and a yell, off. Music continuing.

Richard: *(off)* Ah!

Raoul: *(off)* Now what is it?

Richard: *(off)* I hit my head again. It's some sort of metal handle.

Trying to find the source of the sound, Madam Giry moves L, facing downstage. Behind her, the left-hand round door of the boiler slowly opens, music building. She turns, just in time to see a white-gloved hand emerge. She screams, recoiling DL.

Raoul: *(off)* There's that awful noise again.

Richard's head appears from the boiler door and stares at Madam Giry.

Richard: No need to panic. I can see what it is. *(He climbs out, and looks back)* That's funny. It's an old boiler.

Madam Giry: Do you mind?

Richard: *(hastily)* No, Madam Giry, I was referring to this contraption, part of which is clearly a false door, out of which we have just extricated ourselves after a long and arduous journey down a secret passage which started all the way up in...*(He gives up, and calls inside the boiler)* It's all right, it's only Madam Giry.

Raoul: *(climbing out, the echo on his voice reducing as he does so)* What do you mean, only Madam Giry? Is there worse?

Madam Giry stares at him and he stiffens.

Where are we, anyway?

Madam Giry: The boiler room - sir.

Raoul: Funny place for a secret passage to end up.

The Persian: *(climbing out, the echo on his voice also reducing)* There will be another concealed entrance - one that takes us even lower. Look around.

His back to Mauclair, Raoul moves up the right side of the boiler. Having closed the door, The Persian turns to see Mauclair. He reacts, crossing to kneel, during the following.

Richard: *(to Madam Giry)* May I ask what you're doing here, madam?

Madam Giry: I came down to sort out Mauclair, sir - *(she indicates)* but, as you can see, he's asleep again.

Richard: *(turning to see him)* Oh, really!

He crosses to him, but The Persian holds up a warning hand and rattles off some dangerous sounding Persian gibberish.

What?

The Persian repeats it exactly.

Oh, I see.

The Persian: His last sleep, I'm afraid. Delivered by the *(he appears to pluck something from the back of Mauclair's neck, the body twitching)*...Hyderabad Hypodermic.

Richard: The what?

The Persian rises. Madam Giry and Raoul join Richard in peering at the Persian's nipped thumb and forefinger.

The Persian: An injection of deadly poison, administered by a dart, invisible to the naked eye.

He flicks his finger, and their eyes follow the trajectory of the invisible dart over and down to the floor, L. During the following all cross quickly L, holding lanterns, looking for it, still unable to see it.

Your 'ghost', madam, drugged Mauclair, and turned off the lights, every time he wished to bring off one of his little surprises...*(He lifts Mauclair's legs)*...but this time he has shut the poor fellow's mouth for good.

He drags Mauclair off, R. The boiler hum, reduced, begins imperceptibly to fade out.

Madam Giry: That foreign person wants to watch himself, sir. You know what happens to people who cross 'him'.

Richard: Sadly, I do, Madam Giry. But this is not the work of a ghost. He is irrefutably a man - a walking nightmare of a man.

The Persian enters, his voice strong.

The Persian: Yes, my friend...

Eastern music underlays.

You little realize how accurate a description you give. Nor is it surprising you took him for a ghost for I have known him a long time, this man you call 'The Phantom'...Although in my country he is known under another title...'The King of the Trap Doors'.

Raoul: 'The King of the Trap Doors'? Crikey!

The Persian: Like myself, he has trained in the circus as a magician, and became an expert in hidden trap doors, and mechanical devices...so much so that a certain Sultan not only employed him for the fiendish skill with which he created new engines of torture, but also had him design a whole new palace, cunningly fitted with secret passageways and doors - *(he moves to the boiler)* so that our Sultan could appear *(he opens the door)* and disappear *(he closes it)* at will...adding a certain spice to his cruel pleasures. *(He goes close to them)* But for these to stay secret, the Phantom had to suffer the inevitable eastern consequence.

Richard: Good God.

Raoul: Filthy brutes.

Madam Giry tuts.

The Persian: Fortunately, I heard of this. *(He moves R)* I found him. I rescued him. And my reward...*(he turns on them furiously, then controls himself)* I will only say that ever since that day, I have tracked him over many years. I had almost lost hope until I heard of the strange happenings here - and I knew that at last I had found the deformed creature.

Madam Giry: Did you say deformed?

The Persian: Oh yes, I knew those present at his birth. He is horribly disfigured. And yet his voice...

He sings.

SONG 13: BORN WITH A MONSTROUS COUNTENANCE

There is a long pause.

Madam Giry: *(gloomily)* All these years, and he wasn't even a proper ghost. I did everything for that man.

Richard: *(patting her arm)* He fooled us all, Madam Giry. Don't be too downcast.

Madam Giry: *(a bit surprised)* Thank you, sir. You're very kind.

The gaze into one another's eyes, sudden sparks flying in this strange, dark place. Raoul becomes aware of the pause, looks up and turns round.

Raoul: *(impatiently)* You two can make up later. Let's get on with it.

The Persian: I agree. *(He indicates off L)* Those steps, Madam Giry - where do they lead?

Madam Giry: *(turning to look, holding up her lantern)* Down to the bottom cellar, sir, but there's nothing down there now - it's empty.

Richard: You said there was a manhole. *(To the others)* Down to the lake.

Raoul: *(excitedly)* Is this true, Madam Giry?

Madam Giry: Yes sir, but after they dropped them bodies down it, we had it blocked off.

Raoul: Nevertheless, I'm going to take a look.

The Persian makes a move.

No, you stay and search in here. She said she saw men working at boilers. I'll be all right.

The Persian: Very well, but take great care. And remember...*(he gets into the position)* Ha!

Raoul: *(into the position)* Ha!

Richard: *(into the position)* Ha!

Madam Giry: *(into the position just as quickly, without quite knowing why)* Ha!

The others look about, puzzled to gear a fourth "Ha!".

Raoul goes off L, pistol in front of his nose, pausing to look oddly at Madam Giry.

The Persian: *(indicating R)* We will begin the search over here.

He goes off R with his pistol before his nose, Richard and Madam Giry go to follow him, their fingers held before their noses.

Richard: You'd better stick close to me, Madam Giry.

Madam Giry: Are you sure that's quite proper, sir?

Richard: It's all right, I'm a widower. *(As they go)* By the way, what do your friends call you?

Madam Giry: *(as they go, sourly)* I haven't got any friends.

Music. Fast fade to Black-out. The black cloth flies out, the boiler trucks off L, the manhole trucks on R. As the music fades, Light builds on:

Act Two - Scene Six: The Punjab Lasso

The Bottom Cellar. Same time.

The lighting is gloomy. Stone steps lead from high up, UL. They have an iron railing, and a pale gas-lamp attached. The manhole, R, is stone, circular, like a well parapet, with a convex iron grille covering it. Ripples of water are cast from it, lighting the R upstage portal and the face of anybody who looks down into it.

Raoul cautiously enters down the steps, carrying his lantern, pistol before his nose. He moves slowly to C, peering about him. There is a movement on the floor DL, and he turns swiftly, pointing the pistol - Ha! - and we see a furry shape scoot off into the DL entrance, squeaking. Recovering, he crosses to the well, puts his lantern on the floor behind it, peers down into the water, takes a coin from his pocket, drops it and listens. After an interval, there is a distant 'plop' and the ripples on his face speed up. He puts down the pistol, takes hold of the grille, and tugs with all his might, but it won't budge. He snatches up his pistol in frustration and moves LC to face upstage, his back dejected. A brief pause, then a thin, eerie, Eastern piping is heard, and the DR entrance begins to glow from within - a pale green light. He turns quickly to stare at this, then with a soft, 'ha!', he brings the pistol to his nose, and cautiously and slowly moves above the portal R. He takes a deep breath, then springs to face the entrance, pointing his pistol. The sound and light instantly disappear. He peers off, puzzled, then turns, lowering the pistol, and moves onstage a couple of paces. There is a sharp whipping sound, and his head is jerked back. He drops the pistol and clutches at his throat, but is dragged partially off DR, to fight his way back onstage. We can now see the thin cord around his neck, leading off DR. He fights to reach the pistol, but is jerked back and on to his back. His feet slide off into the darkness, and the music - which has been strong and dramatic - fades to a throbbing drone.

There is a bang and a cry, off, and Faust appears on the stairs.

Faust: That's twice I've done that. It's ruining these tights. *(He descends)* Jammes, will you please try to keep up, or we'll never get out of here.

Jammes' head appears.

Jammes: We keep going down. *(She descends)* Are you sure Madam Giry said to turn right?

Faust: *(peering off L)* Of course I'm sure! I'm always sure!

Jammes: I thought she said left. *(She glances off DR, and leaps into the air with a piercing scream)* Aaah!

Faust: *(jumping out of his skin)* What was that?

Jammes: *(to him)* Me going, 'Aaah!'

Faust: This is no time for footling jokes, woman!

Jammes: It's no joke - *(she points)* - look!

The music rebuilds.

Raoul reappears, on his knees, fighting his way back on stage.

Faust screams.

The Persian appears quickly at the top of the stairs and fires his pistol.

Faust and Jammes scream, and Raoul collapses. The Persian hurries to him.

The Persian: My young friend, are you all right? *(He loses all sympathy as he sees the black cord around Raoul's neck)*
The Punjab Lasso.

He takes it and lifts Raoul back to his feet, strangling.

This is why I told you to keep your hand before your throat!

Raoul: *(pulling it free)* Well, I'm very sorry!

Richard and Madam Giry appear at the head of the stairs.

Richard: Raoul!

Faust and Jammes scream.

The Persian prowls off DR.

Raoul picks up his pistol.

Richard helps Madam Giry down into the cellar.

Are you all right? What was all the shooting?

Raoul: *(peering about)* It's him. He's here somewhere. He nearly got me.

Madam Giry: *(going to Faust and Jammes)* I told you two to turn left, or you'd end up in the cellars!

Jammes: *(to Faust)* See!

Raoul: Just as well they didn't, Madam Giry. It was their screams, which saved me. *(He pats a hand on each of their shoulders)* Thanks, chaps.

The Persian returns.

(He turns to The Persian) Did you -

He finds Faust holding his hand.

(Having to pull his hand free) Did you wing him?

The Persian: There's no blood, no sign of anything. Only these blank walls.

He crosses to extreme UR between the manhole and the group.

Raoul: Damn the brute. He really is a ghost.

Raoul crosses to the manhole and shouts down.

Damn you!

The Phantom: *(off, echoing, as if from the well)* Damn...you...!

Raoul stiffens. Music. All believe this to be the echo of Raoul's voice.

The Persian: *(hurrying to him)* What is it? What do you see?

Raoul reaches a long way down into the manhole, straining, and fetches out a piece of white material.

Richard: It's a handkerchief!

Raoul: Christine's. And still tear-stained.

Richard puts a hand on his shoulder.

The Persian: *(peering into the manhole)* Look there - those scratch marks.

Raoul: *(joining him)* By George, they look like staves of music!

The Persian: So they are. *(He thinks)* I wonder. A lock sprung to react to a certain pitch of sound...it is possible. Can you sing it?

Raoul: I'll have a bash.

The Persian: Good lad.

Raoul sings down the manhole, his voice echoing, slowly moving round it in a circle, followed by The Persian, to end back where they started. Richard, Madam Giry, Faust and Jammes still in their group L, stare at them as if they are mad.

SONG 14: IN THE SHADOWS, DIM AND DREARY

A long pause, then the sound of a bolt and a massive grinding of stone. Faust yells, indicating steps behind him, and all run UR to stare as the steps slowly grind their way upstage, hinging to reveal a hole from which pours a green light. Music. Raoul gets to the front, crouching, peering in.

Richard: *(staring in)* I don't believe it!

Raoul goes into the hole.

Careful, Raoul!

The Persian: *(crossing quickly to the hole)* Follow him! It's important we stay together! *(To Faust and Jammes)* You two, as well!

He ducks into the hole.

Faust: *(interested)* Who's he?

Richard: *(taking Madam Giry by the hand)* Oh, shut up and do as he says.

As he leads Madam Giry to the hole, followed by Faust and Jammes, the Light fades to Black-out. The music builds, then fades to a thin accompaniment. Their voices are heard, echoing, as in a tunnel.

Jammes: *(off)* Oh Mr Faust! I can feel a draught.

Faust: *(off)* Well, it's nothing to do with me, dear.

Richard: *(off)* Just do as you're told, you two - and stick close to me and Amelia.

Faust: *(off)* Amelia?

Madam Giry: *(off)* You heard him!

The Persian: *(off, softly)* Quiet! I think we're getting somewhere.

A twittering of birds, and the Light builds on:

Act Two - Scene Seven: An Illusion In Iron

An underground room. Immediately following.

A strange, brilliant scene. At the rear, a cloth depicting a primitive jungle, complete with animals, and some sky. C, a mound of foliage, with an ape crouched in it, a serpent entwined around one of the branches. R and L, are two spiky plants. The DR and DL entrances are shut off with barred gates, through which shines a pale green light. DC is a small, golden casket. The lighting is dappled and mysterious, the sounds are the sounds of an aviary, not a jungle. Raoul crawls on from R followed by The Persian. Raoul moves around the mound, from L to R, The Persian DC. Madam Giry crawls on.

Madam Giry: *(staring)* Now what? *(She, too, moves around the mound from L to R)*

Richard crawls on, crosses to the plant, L then Jammes crawls on.

Jammes: Ooh!

She runs to peer through bars DL.

Faust enters, remaining on his hands and knees, peering about.

Faust: Are we outside?

Madam Giry: Don't be ridiculous. We're five storeys underground.

She joins Richard, L.

The Persian: It is one of his illusions.

Jammes: An illusion?

The Persian: *(crossing up to the mound, L)* I have experienced this one before. An exotic torture chamber, similar to

one he designed for the Sultan.

He taps a soft-looking leaf with his gun, and it clanks.

Raoul: Iron!

Music rumbles, the birds become distorted. Raoul moves quickly to the bars, R, tapping them. Jammes taps hers. Madam Giry feels the portal, L, Richard, the cloth, Faust, the floor. The Persian moves around the mound, above to its right.

The Persian: Everything you see will be made of the same metal. The Sultan used to call it his 'African Forest'.

Richard: Why did he do that?

The Persian: Because the iron can be heated to a tropical heat. Red heat, if necessary. The heat of an oven.

He sees the casked and moves slowly towards it during the following, followed by all the others to form a tight group around him, DC.

But his victims need not perish from the heat, for it was part of the torture to offer them the choice of a quicker death...
(*he opens the casket*)...The Punjab Lasso.

He holds up a tangle of black cord. Sting in the music.

Six. And six of us.

With a great screech of metal, a wall drops in behind them. It is the 'corridor' cloth, but completely unlit. The Lighting almost a full Black-out except for a pale blue glimmer on their figures.

The music continues to rumble.

Fool that I am, we are trapped!

As they peer about them, panic-stricken, the echoing laugh of The Phantom is heard. They freeze.

Richard: (*whispering*) Is it him again?

The Persian: No doubt he is watching us - as he and the Sultan used to watch the sufferings of those other tortured wretches in Persia.

Richard: Well, do something! You got us in here, get us out!

The Persian: I will try what I can, but I fear it is useless.

He moves to LC and calls up.

Phantom...Remember me, Phantom!...Remember the Circus...and remember - our mother!

Sting in the music. All react away from him.

The Phantom: (*off*) I'm afraid you call in vain, my little brother. You chose your path, I mine. You may now perish with your friends. I would compose you all a requiem, but time presses - you must die unaccompanied. Adieu.

The music has died, and a soft hissing takes over, building in intensity. Everything begins to glow red, and all stagger and pull at their throats as the heat hits them.

The Persian: It is as I feared. He is beyond reason. He has turned on the heat.

He breaks up LC, beaten.

Faust: (*tearful*) He could have at least let me go!

Madam Giry: Oh, really!

Raoul: Buck up, man.

Faust: Well! All I did was take a wrong turning (*to Jammes*) and that was your fault!

Richard: Recriminations are pointless. Leave the child be.

Raoul holds out his hand and Jammes runs to him to be comforted.

(To Madam Giry) Are you all right, Amelia?

Madam Giry: (*gasping*) I think so, Emile...Only it's so hot...Can't get me breath...

The Persian: (*holding up the lassos*) Yes, we may be glad of these soon.

Raoul: I'll never take that way out.

Richard: (*proudly*) Nor I. We can at least die like Frenchmen.

Faust: (*bitterly*) We're *going* to die like Frenchmen...beautifully cooked!

They sing. The lighting is now quite bright, although extremely red. They sing more or less in a line, out front, grand opera. Raoul and Jammes are R, The Persian and Faust L, Richard and Madam Giry C.

SONG 15: WHAT AN AWFUL WAY TO PERISH

By now, all are on their knees. As they sing the final note, they collapse - Jammes doing a dying swan - and Lights fade to Black-out, the hissing building to a loud level over the scene-change. Some of the voices in the above song can be doubled from off if necessary from 'Oh my dear Emile'. The company clear, taking the casket with them. The gates hinge open, and the cloth rises on:

Act Two - Scene Eight: The Final Drama

The Phantom's Chapel. Immediately following.

Although the lighting is subdued, everything seems to glow. At the rear, the huge pipes of the organ (backlit cloth) with keyboard and lighted candelabra below. Above, purple drapes and glowing chandeliers. The music tinkles and rustles. The Phantom enters from R, followed more slowly by Christine. There is a little echo on his voice only.

The Phantom: (*taking off his hat*) Don't be frightened. I mean you no harm.

Christine: (*looking about her*) What place is this?

The Phantom: (*taking off his cloak*) My chapel. (*He puts the hat and cloak on to the organ, L*) The last time I brought you down, you came only to the shores of my lake. Well, this time - this time, I do not think you will be returning.

Christine: I don't understand why you're doing this. I sang Marguerite. That was my promise - to sing Margerite for you one last time.

The Phantom: (*moving DL*) But you did not sing it for *me*, Christine.

Christine: (*faltering*) I swear it.

The Phantom: Not in your heart. I think we both know for whom you sang.

She lowers her eyes.

Well, all that is ended. Now you can only be mine.

Christine: (*frightened*) What do you mean? What have you done? (*She crosses to him in sudden panic*) Raoul!

The Phantom: (*crossing R, almost screaming*) Forget that name!

Christine: (*to C*) What have you done to him? Tell me!

The Phantom: He came between us. Well, no longer. I have destroyed him - utterly. He is dust.

Christine: (*faltering*) You're lying to me.

The Phantom: It is the truth, Christine. He is dead.

A pause. She sways, then falls. Music underlays the following. He half crosses to her.

(Softly, pained) Oh, Christine...if only you could weep for me like that.

Christine: *(muffled)* I did weep for you once.

The Phantom: Out of pity, Christine, not love. But it is only a question of time. In time, you will grow to love me. I know it.

The music has stopped. He begins singing, unaccompanied.

SONG 16: NE'ER FORSAKE ME, HERE REMAIN

The last note turns into a sustained high falsetto scream, The Phantom leaning over her, nearer and nearer. It should last as long as possible. Finally she pulls off the white mask, and the scream turns into a terrible cry, The Phantom turning and crawling away from her DR, the music thundering, screaming in its turn, the lighting changing to one very harsh, bright, low spotlight on his face, spilling on Christine beyond. As described by The Persian, his face is like a skull, the white bones jutting. After a while, he speaks, not looking at her.

The Phantom: *(in a low harsh voice, treated if possible)* So, Christine...Do you hate me now?...Do you?...Hate me for being born a monster?

Christine: No. I pity you, my poor Phantom, but love you, never. Your monster's face has soured your soul.

The bright Light fades, the other Lights return to normal, all effects and music cease. He rises and scoops up the mask, Christine recoiling.

The Phantom: Well. You have spoken. *(He crosses UL of the organ, to put down his mask carefully)* And now for the wedding ceremony.

Christine: *(rising and recoiling DL)* What?

The Phantom: I had hoped for a more joyous occasion, but one must do what one must. We shall be properly married here - you and I.

He has pressed an organ key. Music: "Ne'er Forsake Me". Very slowly, the wedding dress, on a dressmaker's former, glides on from R. Light glows on it. He waits until it is fully on and still before speaking.

Put it on.

Christine: Never.

The Phantom: Christine, put - it - on!

He points a finger. The music becomes hypnotic. With a dead face, she moves stiffly towards the wedding dress, following it as it retreats into the darkness R, The Phantom following her with his finger.

Soon, we shall be united, Christine - forever!

He flings himself at the organ and plays the opening of the Bach toccata and fugue at full throttle, his elbows working, his coat-tails flapping. After the introduction, he jumps up to the left of the organ, and points a finger at it. It continues to play quietly on its own.

We shall reign side by side, my dearest Christine - side by side in my domain of darkness - never moving, never tiring - side by side - forever!

He produces a long, gleaming knife, holding it up high. Music crashes and the organ stops. The lighting changes to a down light on him, and a sidelight on the knife. He turns it so that its light flashes over all the auditorium.

I know she will never love me in life...But in death...Yes...in death, there is time...*(He caresses the knife lovingly)* All the time in the world...

Music and an area R begins to glow. He turns away, hiding the knife, as Christine slowly enters from R, wearing the wedding dress. He turns to stare at her.

Oh, my goodness...my diva...(He crosses and kneels before her) Sing for me one last time...I implore you...As your teacher, I command you...Sing!

The music stops.

Christine: (dead voice) I can never sing again.

A pause. He rises.

The Phantom: Then let the wedding ceremony commence. (He takes her and leads her quickly over L) It is time.

Christine: What, no priest, no witnesses? Or is the ceremony also to be an illusion?

The Phantom: No. The plans are laid.

He presses another organ key. Snap to Black-out. The wooden thump of an opening trapdoor. Two falling yells becoming louder. A thump. A special square downlight picks up the Priest and the Chorus Girl, R. Sawdust falls down the light.

Chorus Girl: (struggling up) Oh, me bruises! (She looks up into the trap light) What happened to the pavement?

As she helps up the Priest, the lighting reverts to normal and they both see The Phantom. Both scream and recoil.

The Phantom: Don't be alarmed. All will become clear shortly. (Aside) And afterwards, there will be no need of explanation.

The Priest: I saw, it's powerful stuff, this beaujolais. I've only had six litres, and I'm hallucinating.

The Phantom: It's quite real, Parson. You are simply to officiate a wedding. You 'friend' is our witness. Do you have a prayer-book?

The Priest: Not on me.

Chorus Girl: He's been ministering all night.

The Phantom: (pointing above, furious) Then you may use mine!

A large prayer-book falls from above, landing at the priest's feet.

The Priest: (picking it up, to the Chorus Girl) This is the weirdest dream. Pinch me, and I'll wake up.

Chorus Girl: You don't usually.

The Phantom: Perform the ceremony! (He leads Christine forward) And allow me to introduce my bride.

The Priest: Charmed, I'm sure. (To the Chorus Girl) I think it's going to be all right. (He moves UC, to The Phantom) If you'd care to kneel.

The Phantom and Christine kneel, facing upstage, before him. Seeing this, the Chorus Girl also kneels.

Not you!

Chorus Girl: (rising, angry) Well, how was I to know? I've only been consummated, not married!

The Phantom: Silence!...And proceed.

He waves a hand. Soft, nuptial organ music.

The Priest: (opening the book) 'Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the sight of God to join together this woman and this - in Holy Matrimony. (He leans forward, confidentially to The Phantom) I take it you just want the short version?

The Phantom: (a dangerous growl) Hurry up.

The Priest: (recoiling) Do you have a ring?

The Phantom holds it high in his left hand.

Place it on her finger.

The Phantom does so.

I now pronounce you man and -

The Persian enters quickly from DL, covering him with his pistol.

The Persian: Oh, no, you don't!

Chord, and the organ stops.

Madam Giry enters R, pointing.

Madam Giry: Don't you dare!

Chord.

Richard enters L, pointing.

Richard: Don't move, Phantom!

Chord.

Raoul enters DR, covering him with his pistol.

Raoul: All the exits are covered!

A chord.

Faust and Jammes run on from L, to be upstage of Madam Giry.

Christine: *(rising)* Raoul you're alive!

Final chord as she runs to him.

The Phantom: *(screaming)* Alive! Impossible! You can't have escaped! You can't! How did you do it?

Richard: It was really rather simple, Phantom. Somebody turned off the gas.

He gestures.

Remy, his arm in a sling enters from L, to stand proudly on Richard's left. A fanfare, ending on a rather cracked note.

The Phantom: You!

Richard: He was badly wounded, Phantom, but you failed to kill him, for Remy is one of those rare people with his heart on the - erm - on the - erm -

Remy: *(irritated)* Other side, sir.

The Phantom makes as if to attack them.

Two Stagehands appear upstage of Richard and Remy, carrying pick-axe handles, followed by Lisette, carrying a lantern.

The Phantom turns away R to stare at Christine.

The Persian: And now, little brother, you must answer to me. There is one tale of your infamy I did not relate - the murder of our mother and father!...I knew they never fell off that tight-rope! You greased it, you horror!

The Phantom: They knew me for what I am! Nobody must live who sees my face!

He draws out the word 'face', moving in a big semi-circle from R to L, driving them all back, to be faced by The Persian,

who drives him back in his turn with the pistol.

The Persian: Which is why you sought my death in Persia! I live to this day only because you thought your assassin succeeded! And now - *(he cocks the pistol)* - the final drama.

Christine: *(running forward)* No!

Raoul: Christine!

But it is too late, The Phantom has grabbed Christine, the knife held high.

The Phantom: Don't move! I can kill her and myself before any of you move!

He moves her R and L, always keeping her between him and pistols of The Persian and Raoul, neither seeing the opportunity for a clear shot. Music underlays all the following.

Chorus Girl: *(running RC)* Oh Mum, I swear I'll never touch another drop!

The Phantom slashes at the Chorus Girl with the knife. She screams, and the Priest drags her back.

The Phantom: *(soft, pained)* Oh, Christine...even my last happiness is to be denied me...We must die unwed.

Raoul: No! *(He puts down the pistol, holding out his hands)* Please.

Madam Giry: *(moving in a little)* Don't do it, sir.

The Phantom looks at her, his staunch supporter through the years. A pause.

The Phantom: Remember...I do this out of love...I am not all monster...Farewell...Christine...

He stabs, the motion concealed by her body. Big sting in the music. Everybody turns away, crying out in horror. A pause, then Christine pulls free and runs to Raoul. She is unharmed. All turn to stare at The Phantom. We now realize he has stabbed himself instead. He pulls out the knife, drops it and falls.

Christine...All I ever did was love...Christine.

The music stops. As before, he begins the song, unaccompanied. During it, light focuses on him.

SONG 17: NE'ER FORSAKE ME, HERE REMAIN (REPRISE)

Silence. He died. The music returns as Christine takes off the ring, presses it into his dead hand. Raoul moves forward, and brings her back, R.

The Persian: Well, at least he's at rest now.

Richard: Poor -

Remy: Devil?

Richard: Yes. Bit of good in him somewhere, I suppose.

Raoul: There is in us all, Father, there is in us all.

The Priest: Amen to that.

Christine: And he was once my Angel of Music.

All face front and sing:

SONG 18: HE WILL NOT GO WITHOUT A FRIEND

Black-out. Restore lighting for curtain calls. The calls are taken separately downstage of the tableau curtain, which closes as soon as possible, and which resemble 'Opera' calls as much as possible. The Phantom is the last to appear,

wearing his hat and white mask. He turns upstage and sweeps off the hat and mask. The Company react back in horror, but when he turns front it is the actor, the hideous make-up removed.

CURTAIN (End Of Act Two)